

John D. Higginbotham of Guelph, author of *When the West Was Young*, reached Alberta in 1884 and immediately began collecting material for his book, which was published in 1933. He has read *Johnny Chinook* and our review with interest and reports: "Several inaccuracies occur in *Johnny Chinook*, which may be pardoned in the work of a stranger to the country. The author, however, I found very interesting." Dr. Gard, he says, used 15 from *When the West Was Young* and gave credit for three. A double error is scored by Higginbotham. "The mounties reached Lethbridge in 1774" should be "The mounties reached Fort Lethbridge in 1874." The wrong figure was due to bad typing, the wrong place to memory. Thanks for correc-

FOOTHILL and PRAIRIE MEMORIES

A GROUP of POEMS

by

JOHN D. HIGINBOTHAM

Dearest Laura, with love,



from

John.

All my past life is mine no more,
The flying hours are gone;
Like transitory dreams given o'er,
By memory alone.

—Earl of Rochester.



JOHN D. HIGINBOTHAM

*John D Higinbotham
Christmas greetings - 1948.*

WHY I LOVE THE WEST

ASK why the eagle soars in air
Or builds so high his craggy nest,
Ask why the fish to seas repair—
Then ask me why I love the West.

Ask why the beautiful butterfly
Finds in the flower a place to rest,
Or why the swallows homeward fly—
Then ask me why I love the West.

Ask the fond mother whose fair mite
Lies in contentment on her breast,
The reason of her sweet delight—
Then ask me why I love the West.

Is it because the skies are blue,
The sun so genial, friends the best?
Is it because their hearts are true
That I so dearly love the West?

MY BIRTHDAY

Written at Lethbridge, Alberta, in the long canyon on the Macleod trail, while out walking, on November 23, 1885. These thoughts came to me after receiving a congratulatory telegram from my friends on attaining my majority.

MY birthday has come 'round again,
And I am twenty-one—
A man, ah no, I'm but a child,
My life seems just begun.
I think upon the past, and oh
How little I have done!

Two years ago I little thought
That I these plains would roam
Or climb these hills and watch the stream
Dash up its feathery foam;
Or see the sun sink o'er yon mount,
Two thousand miles from home.

My heart is filled with thankfulness
And pleasure when I find
That tho' I am so far from sight
I am not out of mind;
And that my friends are still to me
Affectionate and kind.

TO THE WHITE ROSE

—Written in Miss Rose Alba Girard's autograph album,
September 5, 1885.

STROLLING o'er the sunlit prairie
Saw I lovelier than a fairy,
Clad in garments light and airy,

Oh my heart with rapture glows
While I, in these lines disclose
What I found—a pure White Rose.

Must it, like Sharon's rose, decay?
Must it but bloom for one short day?
Like meteor must it shed its ray,
Then vanish into night away?

Kind Heaven spare it such a fate!
Long let it live in happy state,
Oh find for it a worthy mate,
If Thou for it must one create.

And when at some far distant date
The spirit can no longer wait
But must its fair home abdicate
Wilt Thou in joy and peace translate
The lov'ly Rose to heaven above?
May angels open wide the gate
And sweetest music celebrate
Its entrance to a world of love.

FROM A YOUNG MAN TO A LADY
MANY YEARS HIS SENIOR

If I speak to Thee in Friendship's name,
Thou think'st I speak too coldly;
If I mention Love's devoted flame
Thou say'st I speak too boldly—Moore.

MY Darling, permit me this once to address you,
Since someone much older than I must caress
you,

Caress you and call you his dear little wife,
And walk by your side in your journey thro' life.

I have seen you and loved you, 'twas no fault of mine
My heart was o'erpowered by charms so divine;
And tho' my ambition towered upward too far,
I knew, ere beginning, I aimed for a star.

Ah! poor wretched mortal, my birth was too late;
And I must, with meekness, submit to my fate.
Nay, whoever learned from the teachings of sages
That Love was e'er barred by a diff'rence in ages?

Remember, my love, that the age of a man
Is as nothing compared with eternity's span.
Shall Love, for the lack of a year or two, stop,
When a year in the ocean of Time is a drop?

November 15, 1886.

THE BRONCHO BUSTER

“THE Kid” sat on a broncho’s back
When all but he had fled—
Into the air, or had a seat
Upon the back-yard shed.

The horse buck’d on—he would not stop!
“Kid” held the bucking strap,
Till after one terrific buck,
The boys all heard it snap.

“Stay with him—stay with him” they
cried aloud,
“And do not take on so—
For you can stick on the buckingest horse
That ever we saw go.”

Then came an awesome, thundering buck,
“The Kid!”—oh where was he?
Ask of the winds that far around
Swept o’er the N.W.T.

1885.

THE BROTHER'S QUARREL—A PARABLE

Written subconsciously during the night, on the backs of envelopes, and found in the morning on the floor of my bedroom. On the previous evening, President Cleveland's message to Congress on the Venezuela Boundary Dispute, which threatened war against Great Britain, had been presented. This undoubtedly, was the cause of these lines.

UNCLE Sam was a farmer with acres wide,
And a practical fellow was he;

Uncle John had a farm by the rolling tide,

And another one over the sea;

There were not such brothers beneath the skies

So happy, contented, so wealthy and wise.

Their children were numerous, good and fair,

And loving as children could be;

And Uncle Sam's daughters had nut-brown hair,

And they loved their cousins beside the sea—

The lads of the flaxen locks were they

With eyes of azure, strong, brave and gay.

But alas! one day a contention arose

Between my dear uncles twain,

And bitter words were exchanged for blows,

And friends interposed in vain.

They burned with fire—tho' the children cried,

They sabred and shot till they bled and died.

But when the glad morning of peace appeared

My dear aunts Martha and Jane

With their shelterless, fatherless children neared

The place where their loved lay slain:

And they kissed and wept in that silent wood

And they prayed to God for their children's good.

They prayed to God for a coming day
When fighting should be no more,
But when peace like the boundless ocean's spray
Should touch upon every shore.

And Sammy and Johnny now wonder why
Their fathers fought in the days gone by.

Lethbridge, Alberta,
January 14, 1896.

OUR THANKS TO

MRS. KIRKLAND, Guelph
FOR SENDING US A CAKE

DEAR friend, we know that thou art kind;
Hast thou not given proof of this
By sending to our far-off home
A comfort, which all those who roam
In distant lands will ever miss—
And which no foreign hands can make
Like those at home—a home-made cake?

August 8, 1885.

"THE CHILDE HAROLD"
(*Harold Torrance Higinbotham*)
January 17, 1894 (Aged one year)

O H, I see you "little tot,"
Baby Boy,
Here's a penny for your thought,
Baby Boy;
Tho' now you're quiet as a mouse,
You're the ruler of our house,
And the lord of e'en my spouse,
Baby Boy.

You're an angel when at play,
Baby Boy,
How I wish you'd stay that way,
Baby Boy;
But no sooner do I sleep,
Than you lift your voice and weep,
And it's then I'd sell you cheap,
Baby Boy.

Oh, you are a jewel rare,
Baby Boy,
With your curly, flaxen hair,
Baby Boy,
And your azure, roguish eyes,
Tho' you're only one year wise,
You're a terror for your size,
Baby Boy.

HEROES

THE days of hero-worship have not fled,
The crowds acclaim the warrior's return—
Garlands and tears are for the distant dead,
For them the marble niche, the sculptur'd urn.

For Queen and country, marched they to the fight,
They left their homes and cross'd the storm-swept
sea

To battle for the cause they deemed the right,
That brother Britons might, like them, be free.

We give all praise all honor to the brave,
And grant full glory to the exiled slain,
For those who sleep beneath the veldt or wave,
Or happily to home return again.

Bravely enough we draw the keen-edg'd sword,
And strike at those who would our friends assail,
But, Peter-like, we fear the taunting word—
Our moral nature needs the coat-of-mail.

Yes, greater they who on life's battlefield,
With unseen foes and fierce temptations fight,
Who wrestle till the dawn and do not yield,
And far from fickle crowds maintain the right.

These look not for the laurel that shall fade,
Or brilliant baubles to bedeck the breast,
But trusting in the Heavenly Master's aid,
And for the "well done, enter into rest."

1903.

"THE LADIES"

My response to that toast at St. Andrew's Dinner,
Fort Macleod, December 1, 1884.

MR. Chairman and friends, you have made a
mistake

In asking from me a response to this toast,
When many a one, 'round about me, might make
A speech all the fair of Alberta would boast
Could never be equalled from prairie to coast.

Tho' scarce, here, at present, few years will have
passed,

Until each of our dwellings contains its fair prize,
That will sweeten our days and give pleasure at last
To those who now look upon comfort with sighs
And retreat from the glance of a fair lady's eyes.

Is there here now a man who has not had a mother?
(If there be, to a circus I move he should go)

Who has not had a sister? or "yet than all other"

A sweetheart, whose smile cheers the heart of man
so;

A cure for despondency, mis'ry and woe.

Then I thank you for those who can not make reply,

For having thus honored the "crowns of creation,"

For had we them not, ah! how we would sigh.

For our hope would be lost of becoming a nation,

And our lives be as dull as a C.P.R. station.

Then hurrah for the ladies! companions of man,

The hope of our country, the joy of our lives;

May nature give patience, as only she can,

To wash pots and pans and to clean up the
knives,—

In fact, to do all that will make them good wives!

INVITATION TO A HALLOWE'EN PARTY.

Given by Mrs. C. F. P. Conybeare, Lethbridge, Alberta.

To Mr. and Mrs. Higinbotham.

UPON that night, when Fairies light
On Cassilis Downans dance,
Or owre the lays in splendid blaze
On sprightly coursers prance;

In Riverview a chosen few
Of stalking ghosts will throng,
Will you make one and join the fun
With those who glide along
Fu' blythe that night?

—Burns

(So does this, but do not burn it
till you answer it.)

THE REPLY TO MRS. CONYBEARE'S INVITATION TO A HALLOWE'EN PARTY

AMANG the bonnie winding banks
Whur' rins the Belly clear
Whur' Bruce (the younger) rules the ranks
An' pou's the locks an' plays his pranks
On his twa sisters dear.

An' whur' some merry stalking ghaists
Thegither will convene,
To burn their nits an' pou' their stocks
An' haud their Hallowe'en.

We fear we canna' be wi' ye
Amang the chosen few;
But wish to a' a bonnie spree
That nicht at Riverview.

This BURNS, too—that we canna' be wi ye.

Frae "Alder Allan."

October 28, 1897.

REPLY TO MRS. CONYBEARE

After an invitation to their second Hallowe'en Party,
seven years later, 1904.

A LAS! Alack! for a' our sins
Our muse ha' taken speedy flight,
Yet still we stroll Parnassus' height
Like spectral figures in the night
Scant clad, an' arms adorned wi' twins.
An' pity 'tis, alas 'tis true!
We canna', therefore, join the throng
Wha'll glide wi' gladsome glee along
The glittering floors o' Riverview.

BURN this most certainly.

Frae "Alder Allan."

THE ROYAL CITY'S INVITATION TO HER ABSENT SONS

I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back; Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.

Isaiah XLIII: 5-6.

RETURN my sons who far upon the seas
Have spread your canvas to the fresh'ning breeze,

Now shape your course upon the homeward tack;
Come back, Come back.

Ho! ye whom to th' inhospitable North
The lure of wild, the lust of gold drew forth.
The loving Mother and her daughters yearn
For you, Return.

Ye who in th' illimitable West
Afar have flown to seek a shelter'd nest,
Do not the "homing" fires within you burn?
Return, Return.

And ye who in the lazy, languid South
The nectar and ambrosia put to mouth,
Rise from your lethargy, dash down the urn
Return, Return.

Ye prodigals in darkness and distress
Forsake the husks, the swine, the wilderness,
Do not the kindly Mother's welcome spurn,
Return, Return.

Sweet Pleiades your influence extend,
And draw our sons from earth's remotest end.
The gleaming hearth-fire lights the twilight gloam,
Come home, Come home.

"SUCH AS SIT IN DARKNESS AND IN THE
SHADOW OF DEATH"

O H! Lord of Pity look on those
Who toss on beds of ceaseless pain,
Who, when 'tis morning, wish for night,
When evening, sigh for morn again.

And may Thy wisdom, love and power
In largest measure, Lord, descend
Upon the Christ-like mortals who
The sick and suffering do tend.

To those who soothe the fevered brow,
Give water to the thirsty soul,
Shed light along a darkened way
And strive to make the sickened whole.

Lord, richly bless these kind and good
Our noblest, truest sisterhood,
Great rocks which in a weary land
Delightful shades cast o'er the sand.

Galt Hospital, Lethbridge, Alberta,
September 5, 1909.

IN MEMORIAM

REVEREND CHARLES MCKILLOP, B.A.

Died August 20, 1907.

MOAN out, ye winds, and you, O glorious Sun,
Withdraw behind your curtains dark and fell;
Forbear, O Moon, to shine; ye clouds, drop tears
Upon the grave of him I loved so well.

The lightning strikes the eagle down which soared
On powerful pinion in the sun's fierce ray,
And there lies one brought down from heights
supreme
Who never feared the face of mortal clay.

The avalanche descends with thunderous sound,
Sweeping the lofty cedar from its place;
The bluebell and the moss which hugs the ground
Alike are hurled upon the mountain's base.

Open your arms, O Mother Earth, receive
The poor, worn vestments which a mighty soul
Hath cast behind him in the arduous race,
Well run, for his imperishable goal.

—Written on the Great Falls & Canada Railway,
August, 1907.

TO FANNY GREENWOOD

O H! "Nano," thou art like the sky
We view on high.

For it, at times, is deeply blue;
And thou art, too.

And sometimes o'er its heavenly face
The cloudlets race.

When rent with stormy griefs or fears
Thy clouds drop tears.

Yet when the sunshine comes between
The bow is seen.

Thy cheeks, when e'er thy sun draws nigh,
Carnations vie.

And underneath thy brows of night
Thy stars shine bright.

Shine on, with loving beams, to cheer
This earthly sphere.

1886.

VALENTINE TO BABY KENNEDY

PRETTY babe with large, dark eyes,
And silky skin and wavy hair,
With soft, peach-colored, dimpled cheeks
And breath as sweet as perfumed air.

Those little ears so milky white
Are like two shell-gems from the sea
That pearly portal'd smiling mouth
Sends raptures of delight thro' me.

Those little lips of rosy tint
Are sweet as honey-laden flowers,
And fain I, like the bee, would sip,
Beguile and kiss away the hours.

Long may you live sweet Ethel, babe,
To grow in purity and grace,
And may your words and deeds excel
The beauty of your heavenly face.

Macleod, February 14, 1885.

MACLEOD'S FAREWELL

To the 9th Batt. (French-Canadian) Volunteers

GOOD-BYE, kind brothers, many miles you've
come,

To help us pacify a roused domain; -
And now you leave for your beloved home.

May war's alarms n'er call you out again;
But may our country have a peaceful reign,
To last for aye.

But if, however,
Our foes invade,
Or Fenians raid,
We'll ask your aid,
Another day.

Mes amis, au revoir.

June 29, 1885.

IN MEMORY OF OUR LITTLE BOY
WHO DIED

ALLAN GLADSTONE HIGINBOTHAM

Died August 9, 1898.

LEAVE me alone in utter solitude,
And let the fountains of my deep be broken up
To mourn me for my son.
Blythesome and fresh as was the morning dew
Upon the tender bud, he gladden'd all our hearts;
And, like it, vanished ere the sun arose.
Now cold in death, his little marble hands
And heavenly smile lend even Death a charm.

Little I thought, when last I heard him crow,
Or utter loving sounds, and toss his limbs about,
Or nestle in my arms and on my breast,
That I, heart-broken, should return and find
Him in the arms of Man's Unconqu'r'd Foe;
And the bright spirit which cheered him and us
Torn from the house that briefly held it there.

As on a cloud which tho' from earth arisen
The light and beauty of the sunlight falls;
We, too, beheld upon his precious clay
The sweetness and the light from other worlds.
Lay all his soft, sweet-scented things away,
Lest e'en their presence break our bleeding hearts.
Little he heeds our mild caresses now,
Or scalding tears that rain upon his bier.
Sweetly he sleeps, heaped o'er with choicest flowers;
He adds a beauty to the fairest there.

THE GRASS WITHERETH, THE FLOWER
FADETH; BUT THE WORD OF OUR GOD
SHALL STAND FOR EVER. *Is. XL—VIII*

THE tender grass, so green to-day,
The perfumed flowers, now deck'd so gay
Must fade and wither.
Heaven and earth shall pass away,
And we shall moulder in decay,
And soon go hither. *
Yea, all shall die and be forgot,
But God's own word, which changeth not,
Abides for ever.

x See 2 Peter, 3:13.
A new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth
righteousness. 1885.

A HAND TO HOLD.

LAST night I held a little hand,
So dainty and so neat.
I thought my heart would surely burst,
So wildly did it beat.
No other hand e'er held so tight
Could greater gladness bring
Than one I held last night—it was
Four Aces and a King.

—The Australian

That vaunting, bold Australian,
Who told with seeming glee,
Of how he held a dainty hand,
Has nothing much on me.
In fact his wild, Australian tale
Was little more than "gush."
For I, too, held a little hand;—
But 'twas a Royal Flush.

MISSOURI BILL AND THE PARSONS

THRO' Pokertown two preachers went,
Most certainly with good intent,
Collecting money from the masses
For aiding two "Salvation" lasses,
Who late with timbrels took the town,
And turn'd the powers of darkness down.
But ere their purse began to fill
They fell in with Missouri Bill.
Now Bill, tho' very "wild and woolly"
And brusque by nature, was no bully,
Large-hearted, and with dollars risky—
If aught were saved from buying whisky—
So, having met him in their walk,
With little introduct'ry talk,
Informed him they were out collecting
And something from him were expecting.
"You are," said Bill, "If then I must
"Instanter' loosen up my 'dust'"
I want to know just what it's for?"
"It is," they said, "to wage a war
Against the hosts and powers of evil,
In short, it is to fight the Devil."
"How much," said Bill, "will be requir'd
To have his 'Nibs of Hades' fired?"
They thought that fifty dollars quite
Would be collected ere that night.
"Then Sirs," said William, waxing louder
"You're wasting too much shot and powder;
Now, as Missouri Bill's my name,
I'll put you on a first-class game,
Give me one-half—say, twenty-five—

Produce 'Old Nick' to me alive,
And, as I'm near two hundred pounds,
I'll knock him out in seven rounds."
With this the preachers had their fill
Of tackling Missouri Bill
They therefore laugh'd and said "good day"
While Bill continued on his way.

November 16, 1896.

THE BAY OF BRUCE BEAGLE'S BEAGLE

O H! the deep dark bay of Bruce Beagle's dog
Shall not be forgotten very soon,
By the neighbours who hark to the sound of his bark,
As he howls at the round, red moon.

The bay it is deep, and drives away sleep,
As he sits on his haunches to croon
And with elevated nose he pours out his woes
In the ears of the round, red moon.

But the neighbors arose from their warm bed clothes
And swore by the Great Horn Spoon,
That they'd mutilate that beast unless he quickly
ceased,
From baying at the round, red moon.

This inspiration for the above came after watching,
before retiring, a fellow guest at my brother Ed's who,
in his pajamas, stood at a window and cursed the afore-
said dog who bayed at the moon.

HIS NICKNAME

FEW people who have journeyed West
But have occasionally expressed
A wonder why so few are known
To bear the names they rightly own;
But when such names as Jones and Brown
Are found in every camp and town
Nickname and surname take annexion
From figure, habitat, complexion,
Thus one becomes "Three-fingered Jones"
Another goes by "Skin-and-Bones"—
You'd think that Delamere would kick
The man who'd call him "Cat-Eyed Dick"
And William Beresford would kill
Those who addressed him "Long-haired Bill."
But thus it is and thus they came
For use or ornament (?) or shame.

A bride, who had but lately come
To the far West to make her home,
Was talking with a man one morn,
Who, from his voice, was named "Fog Horn,"
Upon the custom practiced here
Of giving men a *nom de guerre*,
And said she was much pleased to know
Her husband was not treated so.
"Ha! ha!" laugh'd "Fog Horn," what a joke
You're telling now to Western folk.
As I'm a gentleman and scholar,
Your husband's known as "PAPER COLLAR."
The N.W.M. Police Barracks, 1895.

THE WEST, OR CHINOOK, WIND

THE "Zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,"
Yet with his love is ne'er allowed to rest;
But, scorn'd, he rends her cloudy veil in twain,
And as a hurricane sweeps o'er the plain.

Fierce, fiery, free—a blustering, bellowing blast,
He shrieks with fury as he rushes past;
In circling clouds the dust before him flies,
Dark, leaden, ominous are his inky skies.

The thundering echoes, sounding far and near
Are now more thund'rous as his hosts appear,
His followers come—a mighty cavalcade—
Along the path their mighty chief has made.

The frightened cattle low for vales in vain,
The wild horse neighs and shakes his flowing mane,
And, seeing in the gale his spectral form,
He rushes onward with the roaring storm.

The fragrant rose-bud on the hill's green side,
The sheltered alders near the river's tide,
The prairie flowers and e'en the joint-grass high,
Bow deep obeisance as he passes by.

Ah, whither dost thou go, thou wild, west wind,
Born in the womb of thy Creator's mind?
"Where'er He listeth, onward will I roam,
Hasting, unresting, till He calls me home."
October 9, 1889.

THE LOST MOUNTED POLICEMAN TO CUSTER, A HORSE — PARKER'S BEST FRIEND

The police camp was on the St. Mary's River and some miles below, Lee's Creek joined it, forming a "Y." The directions given were: "Cross Lee's Creek and go on till you come to the river, then follow it till you find the camp." But it was an easy matter to lose the trail in the snow, and the river was crossed below the fork under the impression it was only the creek. Beyond was nothing but a "waste howling wilderness," and over this the Mounted Policeman wandered a full week, famished, snow-blind, hopeless. When found at last by the driver of the Fort Benton mail stage, he completely gave up and fell inert from his horse, strength and energy both failing when he knew he was safe.

COME Parker, 'tis a bitter day,
Though March winds make you shiver;
But saddle with what speed you may
And take this to the river.

"And come and have a bite of food,
Before you ride away,
For you will need a good square meal,
To keep the cold at bay.

"I willingly would go myself
But do not know the road;
And travel is so bad just now,
I'd make too great a load.

"But you are light, and young and strong,
With warm blood in your veins,
'Twill take the numbing cold a while
To make you drop the reins.

"So rustle now, my trusty lad,
These days have little light,
And this despatch must reach the camp
Before the fall of night."

Thus spake my Sergeant, and for me,
'Twas only to obey;
But well I knew what risk I ran
In riding out that day.

The hurried dinner soon was done,
And Custer had his feed;
And having put the saddle on,
I mounted on my steed.

Adieus all said, away we sped
As fast as we could go,
But winds from the gaunt Rockies' steep,
Had filled the trail with snow.

Still on we plodded, and the trail
I patiently did seek,
Until at last I saw ahead,
A welcome sight—Lee's Creek.

"Soon I will reach St. Mary's brink;
It can't be very long
Before I see my comrades' fire,
And hear their merry song."

"But ah, my lad, false hopes are yours,
The river you have crossed;
Out on the prairie's waste you are,
And worse than that, are lost."

On, on we went till o'er us fell,
The sable robes of night;
Watchful, but weary, down I lay,
And waited for the light.

I took the saddle off his back,
And let poor Custer go;
Then up and down I tramped to form
A coffin in the snow.

My ears were frozen, so I wrapped
The blanket round my head;
And taking one last look around
I sought my snowy bed.

The wind was roaring over head,
The snow fell thick and fast;
The dreadful howl of prairie wolves
Was borne upon the blast.

Even with the howls of wind and wolf
Sweet slumber came to me;
I dreamt of banquets, lordly feasts,
And friends no more to see.

The tempest passed, and morning's sun
Shed its bright beams around;
And found me laid in stately pomp
Upon a narrow mound.

The ground was bare about my bed,
Custer stood at my feet,
For he had scraped the snow away
In search of grass to eat.

Though hungry still, we started out
The long lost trail to find;
Naught but the snow was seen before,
And the vast waste behind.

The prairie looked so weirdly red,
Such strange thoughts crossed my mind,
Vague dreadful things now made me feel
That I was struck snow-blind.

No shipwrecked seaman, far from shore,
Beneath an angry sky,
Could have less hope of being saved,
Nor suffer more than I.

My throat all parched from eating snow,
Face blistered with the sun,
Hungry, half frozen, blind and lost
Helpless and hopeless, done!

In fancy, I could sometimes see
A flock of grazing sheep,
And while I saw them, famished wolves,
Upon their necks would leap.

Again, I saw a smuggler's camp,
Which looked to me quite near;
But as I turned my horse that way
It seemed to disappear.

And then there came a pretty sight,
Which gave me comfort too;
I saw, in evening's light, the form
Of her I used to woo.

Fair as the sunny flowerets,
And lovely as the rose,
A heavenly smile lit up her face,
And gentled all my woes.

But oh, those joys were transient,
The dread reaction came;
I longed for death or to be found,
To me it was the same.

Day followed day 'til six were passed,
And still no help was nigh,
When in the snow, upon my knees;
I called to God on high.

My prayer was heard, an answer came—
God's mercies never fail—
For I could hear and faintly see
The coming Benton Mail.

When found, at last, my strength gave out,
Friends took me from my steed;
Kind helping hands were soon at work,
Supplying every need.

When nearing Fort Macleod at last,
I raised my head to see;
My comrades gathered 'round the gate,
They cheered me lustily.

One day, when in the hospital;
Though only bones and skin,
They brought poor Custer to the door,
But could not bring him in.

"Come, Custer, come," I cried aloud;
He neighed, then eyed the place,
And walking up to where I lay,
He gently licked my face.

"O noblest of a faithful race!
The horse that brought me through,
If I should lose myself again,
Send me a friend as true!"

Fort Macleod, 1884.